Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims shall replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-54 (Canceled)

55. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 57 and further comprising:

identifying an operator logged into the POS system at a time the manual activation of the EAS system is detected; and

storing an identifier of the identified operator in association with the stored indication of the manual activation.

56. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 57 and further comprising:

determining a date and time when the manual activation, as distinguished from an automatic activation, of the EAS system is detected; and storing the determined date and time in association with the stored indication of the manual activation.

57. (Previously presented) A host notification method for use in an electronic checkout system that includes an optical code reader and an electronic article surveillance (EAS) system, the checkout system coupled to an electronic point-of-sale (POS) terminal, the method comprising the following steps:

operating in an automatic activation mode whereby the EAS system is automatically activated in response to a signal from

the optical code reader of good read of a product optical code to deactivate an EAS tag of the product;

operating in a manual activation mode whereby the EAS system is manually activated by action of an operator to deactivate an EAS tag;

detecting, by the checkout system, a manual deactivation attempt of the EAS system;

electronically determining whether the manual deactivation attempt was successful;

in response to determining a successful manual deactivation attempt, transmitting notification thereof by mimicking a reading operation of a read product optical code by transmitting a predetermined special optical code data to the POS terminal or host system using a pre-existing interface of the POS terminal or host system that is operative to handle product optical code data;

storing, by the POS terminal or host system, the predetermined special optical code data, wherein the predetermined special optical code data does not identify a product, is of a same format as product optical code data, and is able to be processed via the pre-existing interface.

Claims 58-59 (Canceled)

60. (Previously presented) A host notification method according to claim 57 wherein said predetermined machine readable optical code data comprises a specially reserved universal product code.

61. (Previously presented) A host notification method according to claim 57 and further comprising, responsive to receiving the indication of the manual deactivation, creating a record of the manual deactivation event.

62. (Previously presented) A host notification method according to claim 57 and further comprising, in the POS, responsive to receiving the indication of the manual deactivation, transmitting a record of the manual deactivation event to a server or backroom controller.

Claims 63-66 (Canceled)

67. (Currently amended) A host communication method for use in an electronic checkout system that includes a data reader to acquire product identification from optical coded products and an electronic tag system, the checkout system coupled to an electronic host system, the method comprising the following steps:

detecting a selected operational event of the data reader or the electronic tag system;

electronically selecting a predetermined special optical code data corresponding to the selected operational event that has been detected;

transmitting, using a pre-existing interface of the host system that handles product optical code data, the predetermined special optical code data corresponding to the selected operational event of the data reader or electronic tag system, notification of the selected operational event occurring by mimicking a reading operation of a read product optical code by

transmitting the selected predetermined special optical code data to the host system, wherein the predetermined special optical code data does not identify a product but identifies the selected operational event; and

storing the predetermined special optical code data at the host system, wherein the predetermined special optical code data is of a same format ~~of~~ as product optical code data able to be processed via the pre-existing interface.

68. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67 wherein the host system comprises a point-of-sale (POS) terminal.

69. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67 wherein the host system comprises a host computer.

70. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67 wherein the data reader comprises an optical scanner and the detected event is an indication of a hardware failure.

71. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67 wherein the detected event is a status of the electronic tag system.

72. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 71 wherein the detected event comprises an electronic tag deactivation failed event.

73. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 71 wherein the detected event comprises a successful deactivation event.

74. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 71 wherein the detected event comprises an attempted deactivation event.

75. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 71 wherein the detected event comprises a successful manual deactivation event.

76. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67 wherein the data reader comprises a plurality of sensors, and wherein the detected event comprises which of the plurality of sensors acquired the product data.

77. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67, further comprising

providing multiple sensor windows in the data reader;

reading data from an article via the data reader;

determining which of the multiple sensor windows was used to read the data, wherein the detected event comprises which of the multiple sensor windows was used to read the data.

78. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 77 and further comprising determining an indication of a position of the article responsive to the indication of which of the multiple sensor windows was used to read the data.

79. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 77 and further comprising determining an indication of an orientation of the article responsive to the indication of which of the multiple sensor windows was used to read the data.

80. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 77 and further comprising:

selecting a special optical code as a predetermined data code corresponding to the indication of which of the multiple sensor windows was used to read the label data; and

transmitting the selected special optical code to the host system as a special code that identifies which of the multiple sensor windows was used to read the label data.

81. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 80 wherein the data reader system includes at least one optical sensor.

82. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 80 wherein the data reader system includes at least one RFID sensor.

83. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 80 wherein the POS terminal serves as the host.

84. (Currently amended) A method of operation of an electronic checkout system having a point of sale (POS) terminal coupled to an optical code reader and an EAS system, the method comprising:

electronically operating in an automatic activation mode whereby the EAS system is automatically activated in response to a signal from the optical code reader of a good read of a product optical code;

operating in a manual activation mode whereby the EAS system is manually activated by action of an operator;

electronically detecting a manual activation of the EAS system to deactivate an EAS tag of the product; and

electronically storing an indication of the detected manual activation of the EAS system at the POS terminal or host system,

wherein said detecting step occurs in the EAS system and further comprising transmitting an indication of the detected manual activation of the EAS system to the POS terminal or host system using a pre-existing interface of the POS terminal or host system that is operative to handle product optical code data,

wherein the step of transmitting an indication of the detected manual activation of the EAS system to the POS terminal or host system comprises (a) selecting a predetermined special optical code data corresponding to the detected manual activation, wherein the predetermined special optical code data is distinguishable by the POS terminal or host system from a product optical code data and is distinguished from an automatic deactivation optical code data, and (b) transmitting, by mimicking a reading operation of a read product optical code, the predetermined special optical code data from the optical code reader to the POS terminal or host system, wherein the predetermined special optical code data is of a same format as product optical code data and is able to be processed via the pre-existing interface.

85. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 67 wherein the detected event comprises a hardware failure.

86. (Previously presented) A host communication method according to claim 85 wherein the hardware failure comprises a failure in a power supply of the electronic tag system.